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SOME POINTS OF SELF-DEFENCE.

THE Common Law of England holds him guiltless who has taken another's life in such circumstances as show justifiable homicide, excusable homicide, homicide by misadventure, or homicide by chance-medley; and the statute declares, affirming it, That no punishment shall be incurred by any person who shall kill another by misfortune or in his own defence or in any other manner without felony: in either of the cases given, the so-called Right of Self-defence may arise. That right of self-defence, although recognised by statute, is not absolute; it is a concession which, if used for retaliative or revengeful purposes, or for reprisals, affords no excuse. The cardinal principle should be that he who is unwilling to risk his acts of self-defence being questioned in a court of law should not take the law into his own hands.

Persons are more disposed to commit the fatal act of self-defence in the cases of burglary and attempts at robbery from the person with violence. There exists a very prevalent idea that the malefactors may be done to death, may be shot at like vermin, under those circumstances, without fear of consequences; but when the subject is examined it does not appear at all clear how far firearms or deadly weapons may be used for defensive purposes, inasmuch as the guiding statements of judges and of various experts in criminal law are of very general application; and after those views have been exhausted, reliance can only be placed upon a jury to safeguard him who has, with reasonable grounds, taken the law into his own hands in such circumstances, should serious results ensue therefrom.

In this connection we must remember that the law presumes when human life is taken that the killing was unlawful, with or without malice as the facts may show. We will suppose that a householder, in shooting at a suspicious-looking stranger who has secretly entered his house late at night, and whom he believes to be a burglar, kills him. The householder will say: 'I am

justified. My house is my castle, to defend against the intrusions of burglars and thieves.' But his self-defence raises the important question, had he reasonable grounds for supposing the stranger he shot to be a burglar? He will be tried, and a jury, in all the circumstances of the case, will consider the reasonableness of his belief. If he had reasonable grounds, they will acquit him; if, in their opinion, he had not, the verdict in all probability will be manslaughter. And all this, a querist may say, for defending my house and my property!

It is so, human life being considered as too sacred to be lightly taken, although it may be thought that a burglar found in a criminal act has as nearly as possible surrendered his right to have his life held sacred.

There are curious cases in legal annals demonstrating the danger of using weapons under the fear of burglary being attempted, and attacking a believed-to-be burglar. One of such cases is of comparatively recent date, and arose as follows: 'A woman living in a cottage on Bridgemarsh Island, a lonely spot on the coast of Essex, was disturbed one dark afternoon in the month of December by hearing, as she supposed, persons attempting to break into the house. Becoming greatly alarmed, she sent for some neighbours' help. A man and two sturdy lads came to her. They looked about the premises, but could find no one; and ultimately the man left; but at the persuasion of the frightened cottager, the two lads agreed to stay that night and guard the premises. Before he left, the man advised her to load the gun she had in the cottage, and if any one came, to fire. A short time before midnight, voices were heard outside the cottage. One of the lads went out and placed himself on the sea-wall within a few yards of the cottage; he was followed by the other lad, holding the gun. Without the least warning, a man jumped up from behind the wall, and seizing the first lad by the throat, threw him on to his knees. His cries for help were heard by the lad who held the gun, and he called out several times, "If you don't say who you are,

I'll fire." No response was made; and he finally fired, fatally wounding the man. It was then found, to the horror of the lads, that the wounded man was the son of the proprietor of a neighbouring brickfield, who was watching his father's ducks; and hearing the two lads come out, and for the purpose of frightening them only, had jumped up and seized one of them by the throat. A doctor was procured; but the wounded man died next morning. The lad who fired the gun was put upon his trial for manslaughter, when the jury returned a verdict of not guilty.

The point to be gleaned from this case is in the statement of the judge, 'that it was a dangerous doctrine to go forth from one of Her Majesty's judges that a person was justified in using a gun under such circumstances.' Ordinary intelligence, however, would see every element of justification therein; but we know that to fire a gun to frighten is not permitted by law.

Well-known writers on criminal law say that in cases of felony committed—which term includes burglary, housebreaking, and robbery from the person—if the offender will not suffer himself to be arrested, but stands upon his defence, or flees, so that he cannot possibly be apprehended alive by those who pursue him, he may be lawfully killed by them. This is justifiable homicide. And so, where an attempt is made to murder or to rob or to commit burglary, if the attack be made by the assailant with violence and surprise, the party attacked may lawfully put him to death.

From this it would seem that before a burglar or robber may be wounded, his arrest must be attempted, if he does not show fight or flee; but this is not so to the full extent, as the following leading, though old, case will show. These are obviously of greater authority than expert opinions. 'A man's servant had secretly procured the help of another servant, a stranger, in her household work, and one night about twelve o'clock, the master being in bed, the former was about to let the latter out of the house. Thinking she heard thieves attempting to break into the house, the master went and told her master so. He took his drawn sword, and the servant, fearing the help should be seen, thrust her into the buttery. The mistress seeing the help there, and not knowing her, conceived her to be the thief, and called to her husband, who entered the buttery in the dark, and lunging with his sword, wounded the help in the chest, causing death. He was tried; but the judges ruled this to be misadventure only.'

A mere trespass without felonious intent, however provoking and irritating, will not justify or excuse the use of deadly weapons in defence of property, as the following case shows: 'A person was greatly annoyed by strangers trespassing upon his farm, and he repeatedly gave full notice that he would shoot any one who did so. He at length discharged a gun at a person who was trespassing, and wounded him in the thigh, which led to erysipelas, and the man died. The shooter was indicted for murder, found guilty, and executed. But if the owner had used a

weapon, such as a stick, and death had ensued, this would still have been manslaughter; for the owner of the property had no lawful right to use any weapon to beat off a mere trespasser; and giving notice of his intention to commit an unlawful act did not cover the consequences of that act.'

We are not, however, without authoritative judicial guidance as to the lengths we are permitted to go in self-defence: we find that Mr Baron Garrow is reported to have said in one case, that any person set by his master to watch a garden or yard is not at all justified in shooting at or injuring in any way persons who may come into these premises even in the night; and if he saw them go into his master's henroost, he would still not be justified in shooting them. He ought, first, said the learned Baron, to see if he could not take measures for their apprehension. But here the life of the prisoner was threatened; and if he considered his life in actual danger, he was justified in shooting the deceased, as he has done. But if, not considering his own life in danger, he rashly shot this man, who was only a trespasser, he will be guilty of manslaughter.

Another very learned judge once summarised the law of self-defence in his address to the jury in the following terms: 'A civil trespass will not excuse the firing of a pistol at a trespasser in sudden resentment or anger. If a person takes forcible possession of another man's premises so as to be guilty of a breach of the peace, it is more than a trespass. It is so also if a man with force enters into the dwelling of another. But a man is not authorised to fire a pistol on every intrusion or invasion of his house. He ought, if he has a reasonable opportunity, to endeavour to remove him without having recourse to the last extremity. But the making an attack upon a dwelling, and especially at night, the law regards as equivalent to an assault on a man's person; for a man's house is his castle; and therefore, in the eye of the law, it is equivalent to an assault.'

On this we would remark, that a simple trespass is a totally different thing from a burglary: the former is not a felony, the latter is.

In a book of old law reports, a supposititious case is put thus by a learned judge as to a mere trespass: 'If B enters a house, and A gently lays his hands upon him to turn him out—which, parenthetically, we may say is the proper act at first—and then B turns upon him and assaults him, and A kills him—not being otherwise able to avoid the assault or retain his lawful possession—it would have been in self-defence.'

The crucial test, it will be seen, of the justifiableness of the act of self-defence is its general reasonableness under the surrounding circumstances, and this is of equal application to self-defence from burglars as to other classes of criminal assailants with violence.

It deserves to be mentioned that some insurance offices now undertake 'burglary and robbery insurances' at premiums varying from two shillings and sixpence to five shillings per cent.; and large numbers of the public are said to be taking advantage of the system. A burglar's visit need not therefore, in such cases, necessarily mean a loss to the householder. This is certainly an improvement on the old order of things, and perhaps it

will do more to lessen the chance of loss of life or violence than any statute; yet, on the other hand, the depredators may gather fresh courage, as their chances of capture are obviously lessened.

THE BURDEN OF ISABEL.*

CHAPTER XVII.—continued.

THEN Ainsworth looked very conscious indeed; for now he was certain of what he had been for some moments dimly suspicious, that the old friend to whom Suffield alluded must be none other than Isabel's father. Suffield could not but note the change that passed upon him, and said to himself: 'It must be opium with him too! To think of such a thing!' Then the gentle, generous heart of the good man was suffused with pity, and with the desire to save his young friend. There were tears in his voice, if not in his eyes, as he leaned towards Ainsworth and laid his hand on his arm.

'Alan, my lad,' said he, 'you must give it up, cost what it will. If it's living alone that tempts you to it, come and live wth me; there's plenty of room in the house, and you can do your writing in here. Nobody will bother you, unless it be those old chaps of Padiham!'

What could Ainsworth do but look amazed and stammer: 'But what do you mean? What's in your mind, Mr Suffield? There's something the matter with you, or with me! There's a misunderstanding, really and truly, on my side or on yours!'

Suffield leaned back in his chair and considered him. 'Do you mean to tell me, Alan, that you can't guess what I'm driving at?'

'Not in the least,' answered Alan, 'I assure you, Mr Suffield. You appear to think that I have become an opium-smoker, or something of the kind. It's a completely mad notion; and if anybody else but yourself had it, Mr Suffield, I should say he was either insane or spiteful. I can't think you're either the one or the other; you must have some good reason for speaking as you've spoken. Tell me what it is.'

'Well, now, then, I'll be frank with you, my lad,' said Suffield. 'I have it on the very best authority—an authority, mind you, there's no doubt about at all—that my niece, Isabel Raynor, has within the last week or so got entangled wth some man who has the bad habit of taking drink, or some other stimulant—got so entangled that she feels responsible for him.'

Ainsworth rose and laughed aloud—a laugh not of merriment, but partly of bitterness, partly of embarrassment—and paced to and fro as he laughed.

'And so,' he said, 'you thought that this man must be me!'

'Well, you see,' said Suffield, somewhat feebly, 'I knew no man but you that she seemed in the least interested in; and then your coming up to London fitted in with the time of this, and you admit that you've seen her.'

'And my having taken to drink or some stimulant, and my entangling her somehow, seemed matters of course, that needed neither discussion nor inquiry! 'Pon my word!' exclaimed the

young man, 'it is the prettiest chain of evidence I ever heard of! It is worthy of a circumstantial case at the Old Bailey! It is wonderful to consider the crimes one's friends may believe one capable of!'

'Not crimes, my lad,' pleaded Suffield, now put out and humbled. 'But there—I see I'm wrong. I confess it.'

'Mr Suffield,' said Alan, stopping before him and laying his hand on his shoulder, 'I couldn't love you and respect you more if you were my father; you are the best and the most generous-tempered man I know'—

'No, no, Alan!'

'But you are. And I can't believe you ever would have thought these things of me yourself; they must have been suggested to you by some one else.'

'Still,' said Suffield, 'I'm responsible, my lad, and I beg your pardon.' (Ainsworth grasped his hand.) 'I see you can't be the man. But who the dickens can he be? Her uncle Harry and I are very much worried about it.'

'Oh, Uncle Harry!' exclaimed Ainsworth. 'Don't you think, Mr Suffield, it would be best if you and Uncle Harry went and put the question to Miss Raynor herself?'

'Perhaps it would—perhaps it would.'

'Now,' said Ainsworth, looking at his watch, 'my time is up.'

'Well, Alan, my lad,' said Suffield, holding his hand, 'you forgive my blundering idiocy?'

'It's not a question of forgiveness between you and me, Mr Suffield,' said Alan; 'it's a question merely of understanding.'

'Say no more, my lad; say no more. I'm just an ass. I was almost forgetting: I want you to come and dine, to meet some people—political nobs, and that sort of thing. But I'll drop you a line when it's fixed.' So Ainsworth went, and Suffield, as he heard the street door close, said to himself: 'What a nice clever lad he is! Now, I must just find that Harry!'

Of course Suffield went and reported this singular interview to Uncle Harry, and Ainsworth as much as he thought prudent or necessary to Isabel, with results which shall appear.

Ainsworth, in sum, merely led Isabel to suppose that her uncle Harry suspected she had taken her father under her wing, and had communicated his suspicion to her other uncle; and therefore Isabel, somewhat nettled and angry that her uncle could not contain a secret, was careful to keep her father as much secluded as possible at such times as her uncle might call, and when he did call she was more reserved with him than had been her wont.

The two uncles hesitated to make up their minds to inquire directly of Isabel herself, as Ainsworth had suggested, and as was manifestly proper, concerning this matter that vexed them. They both knew her—Mr Suffield especially—to be a young lady of spirit, and they feared she might deeply resent, not so much their interference, as the inferential suspicion that she could be doing ought but right. But it came about within a week that they felt they could put the question off no longer. Uncle Harry had called twice, and each time he had returned to report to Suffield his serious impression that the mysterious person with whom Isabel was entangled was

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living in the house with her! He (Uncle Harry) had been delayed before he had been admitted; the landlady had seemed flustered; and there was lurking by the fender-corner a pair of slippers that were obviously too large for Isabel's own feet! Suffield had pooh-poohed that report the first time it was made, but when it was repeated he resolved to find out the truth of the matter at once. Uncle Harry had called on Isabel about tea-time: after dinner, he and Suffield set out to call on her again, leaving Mrs Suffield to suppose that they were going down to the House of Commons together.

Isabel and her father sat at supper. Isabel was at ease, for she expected no visitor, unless Ainsworth or Doughty should come in before bedtime; and her father was in the serenest of moods, for he had that day written a review of a book which Ainsworth had brought him. They sat thus, talking of books and interested in their talk—for Isabel found her father's remarks acute and skilled, and her father found hers fresh and unconventional—when there came a knock at the street door, and an instant or two after the sitting-room door was opened and in stepped her two uncles. Her father sat facing the door, and her uncles stopped as soon as they had entered, with their eyes fixed on him.

'Oh,' said Uncle Harry, and there was a note of suppressed anger and contempt in his voice, which at once roused Isabel's spirit. 'It's you—is it?'

Her father did not answer, but he glanced at Isabel, as in surprise and reproach, as if he would say: 'Have you done this? Have you brought these terrible men down on me?'

Isabel rose and placed chairs for her uncles. 'Won't you sit down—both of you?' she said.

Uncle George shook his head sadly: his usually ruddy tint had sunk into a purplish gray; Uncle Harry paid no heed to her words: he was pale as death, the pupils of his eyes seemed reduced to glittering pin-points, and his hands trembled. Seeing them all standing, John Raynor rose too—apparently out of the merest instinct of politeness: he stood nearly a head taller than his brother. It was clear there was no lack of recognition on either side.

'It is a very long time since we have met, Harry,' said John, holding out his hand.

'Yes,' said Harry, disregarding the proffered hand; 'it is twenty-five years. And once again it is the cause of a woman that brings us together.'

On hearing that, Isabel started and turned, and met her father's pleading eyes, which seemed to ask, 'What does this mean?'

'What are you doing here?' asked Harry, with his eyes still fixed on his brother. 'What mischief have you done!—or are you contriving? You are my brother! It is wonderful! And—God forgive me!—I hate you more than any living thing!'

'Uncle Harry!—Uncle Harry!' cried Isabel. 'What has come to you that you say such horrible things! Why don't you sit down and talk quietly, and be friendly with us? You are brothers—sons of the same parents: are you not ashamed that a brother should speak so bitterly, and feel so bitterly, to a brother?'

'No; I am not!' answered Uncle Harry. His

glance lighted on her an instant, and then returned to his brother.

'You don't know what used to be between them, my dear,' said Suffield in Isabel's ear. 'It always drives Harry mad when he thinks of it!'

'You took my wife from me!' continued Uncle Harry to his brother.

'Not your wife, Harry,' said Suffield, laying his hand on his shoulder with a kindly grasp: 'your sweetheart only. Come; be just if you can't be reasonable.'

'She had promised to be my wife, and she would have been!' said Harry without turning his head. 'You took my wife,' he continued, 'and now you take your daughter!—her daughter!'

John Raynor had listened to him, standing half-dazed with his hands crossed before him. He now stepped forward again with his hand out. 'Is there never to be an end,' he asked, 'of that subject—that unfortunate subject—between us, Harry?'

'Why are you here?' continued Harry. 'Are you come to ruin and kill her daughter, as you ruined and killed her?'

John Raynor sat down and dully listened, while his hand clutched aimlessly at the table: he was deathly pale, and his lips and his limbs were twitching convulsively.

His daughter came to his relief, and stood behind him, with her hands on his shoulders. 'Uncle,' she said quietly, but with a vibration of anger in her voice, 'you must not talk like that! I have let you go on too long! I am responsible for my father being here! I brought him to live with me, and I know what I am doing!'

'You do not! You do not, foolish girl!' cried her uncle. 'He will insinuate himself into your confidence! He will flatter you into the belief that you are the very cleverest woman in all this world! And all the time he will torture your mind and soul with hopes of great things—hopes which never will be fulfilled! And he will live upon you!—live upon you! What is it that women find in him? She was infatuated, as you are! I was preparing to give her all I had, when he came with nothing in his hand, and yet she put her hand in his and went away with him—to poverty and death! I am ready to give you all I have; but no: he comes, not to give, but to take, and you receive him with open arms!'

'It won't do, my dear!' said Isabel's father, starting to his feet suddenly. 'I mustn't do that! I must go away! I must go away at once! I'll go to Alexander! Where are my boots? Will you be so good as ask for my boots, my dear?'

'Uncle Harry, you must go away!' said Isabel, with her hand firmly clasped on her father's wrist. 'Go away, please!—Take him away, Uncle George!'

Before he went, Uncle George came to John Raynor with a peculiar mellowness of both voice and eyes and took him by the hand. 'Well, John,' said he, 'let bygones be bygones; and be a good man. You've got a dear daughter there—as good a girl as ever was. I'll see you again soon.'

He took Uncle Harry's arm, who put his hand

to his head and then to his heart, and walked away with him submissively and in silence.

That night Uncle Harry sent out a telegram to his nephew: 'Send me Daniel at once for a few weeks.'

RECLAIMING THE ZUIDER ZEE.

HOLLAND is about to acquire additional territory, and that neither by conquest nor colonisation. The Zuider Zee, that great expanse of water, half bay, half lake, created six centuries ago by storm and flood at the expense of the mainland, is to be reclaimed and converted into arable land. The idea of this stupendous undertaking has been germinating in the minds of generations of Dutchmen, but only took definite shape about forty years ago, when the successful reclamation of the Haarlem Lake demonstrated the practicability of the enterprise. The Haarlem affair was, of course, a trifle compared with the present project; but as the conditions and methods of operation, although on widely different scales, are practically similar, the results of the smaller operation afford a more or less reliable standard by which to calculate the cost of the present scheme and an approximate estimate as to the value of the reclaimed land.

The Haarlem Lake covered an area of seventy-four square miles, and was converted at a cost of one and a quarter millions sterling, or about twenty-seven pounds per acre. The land was immediately sold at an average price of forty-five pounds per acre, and is now worth not less than one hundred and seventy—a result which spoke eloquently to the keen commercial instincts of the Hollanders in favour of the new scheme. The site of the Haarlem Lake at the present day is intersected by a network of canals, and affords an abundant subsistence to its ten thousand inhabitants.

For the better understanding of the subject, a glance at the physical condition and history of the sea provinces of the Netherlands is necessary, and not uninteresting.

The low-lying coasts of Germany and Holland bordering on the North Sea are protected from the onslaughts of the waves by a double line of defences—one natural, the other artificial. The former consists of a chain of islets extending from the Zuider Zee to the Danish peninsula. These islets are the remains of the former coast-line. Ages ago, before the waters of the Atlantic broke through the neck of land connecting England with France, the German Ocean was a comparatively pacific body, and the adjacent coasts suffered little or no disintegration. The winds and the tides drove the sand along the coast into a number of hills or mounds at more or less regular intervals. Behind this hilly coast-line lay the marsh, swept by every tide, submerged at every flood, and yet not without inhabitants. The elder Pliny (50 A.D.) describes the region as one 'of which it is doubtful whether it be a part of the continent or an arm of the sea.' The Roman historian could not sufficiently express his surprise at finding the place inhabited; and indeed it is doubtful if in

any other part of the globe so desperate a struggle was ever carried on for so bare a subsistence. The dwellers gained their precarious living by such husbandry as could be wrought between the floods, and when these approached, retreated to the hillocks on which their dwellings were erected, and, for the rest, snatched a fickle diet of fishes from the retreating waters. One writer compared the life of these poor people during the floods to that of storm-tossed sailors in unseaworthy vessels, and their condition when the floods subsided to that of shipwrecked mariners.

At a far back geological period, what is now the English Channel was a solid belt of land, connecting France and Britain. And when, by subsidence of the land or otherwise, the Atlantic forced its way through this connecting belt, the North Sea underwent a great change. With the inrush of water through the newly-formed channel the waves of that Sea attained a force and turbulence which soon began to play havoc with the coasts. In a general way, the work of destruction was slow, though persistent; but all too frequently floods and storms of exceptional violence wrought terrible destruction. Large slices of the land were torn away and replaced by water. The Zuider Zee is the result of one of these terrific cataclysms; the Dollart and the Jahde basins similar—silent, but convincing evidences of their power of devastation. The hills and mounds alone offered any effectual resistance. The low ground between them first disappeared through the openings so formed; the seas entered, and found the land immediately behind an easy prey. To-day, all that remains of the ancient coast is the chain of small islands, already referred to, standing out and away from the mainland, like the skirmishers of an army, and providing a breakwater on which the first fury of the waves spends itself before reaching the dike. This dike, the second and artificial defence, is a formidable structure, averaging twenty feet in height, twelve feet in breadth at the top, and from ninety to one hundred feet at the base, and extends along the entire coast of West Friesland, a stretch of some hundreds of miles.

It is uncertain at what date the first dikes were built. Naturally enough, the initial attempts were defective and inefficient. Violent floods repeatedly broke through and over them, laying waste the land, and carrying death, desolation, and ruin to tens of thousands. One of the worst of these visitations occurred in the thirteenth century. A gale prevailing for several days from the same quarter drove the seas with extraordinary violence upon the dike, which at last gave way. Great areas of the country behind the dike were beneath the level of the sea, hence these became an easy prey to the destructive element. With frightful rapidity the storm-driven waves poured in a flood over the land, sweeping away everything in their path. Houses and gardens disappeared in the twinkling of an eye, and the largest trees were uprooted. In a short time an uncountable number of corpses, human and animal, floated hither and thither at the mercy of the flood. The fruitful land had become a sea, a sea with ebb and flow. When the waters subsided, the labour of repairing the defence was commenced; but internecine feud and petty

jealousies hindered and spoiled the work, and the next storm had but a feeble barrier to overthrow.

Some years subsequently the destroyer rushed in with all its fury again. Along the centre coast not fewer than thirty thousand persons perished. The destruction of property was only a degree less appalling. At the mouth of the Ems, a huge wedge of land forty square miles in extent, carrying fifty thriving villages and one prosperous town, was torn away.

Four centuries later, the great Christmas flood of 1717 burst into the devoted land. This inundation surpassed all others by the suddenness and violence of its onslaught. At the darkest hour of a winter's night, while the natives in fancied security were sleeping, a great deluge of water came over and through the dike. 'The flood came over the land,' said an eye-witness, 'not by degrees, as was usually the case, but from the first, shoulder high.' Three days and three nights passed before the flood began to subside. Over ninety per cent. of the buildings in the villages were swept away or destroyed. About eleven thousand persons and some one hundred thousand head of domestic animals perished. Many remarkable incidents are recorded of this flood. Houses were removed from one place to another without suffering any other damage. In one case the dwelling was floated away so tranquilly that the lamp remained lit, and the fowls were undisturbed on their perches. On another occasion two persons, man and wife, sought refuge on a haycock, and after drifting about all night in the greatest peril, reached a place of safety not only without loss of life but with gain. A child had been born during the terrible voyage.

Since the 'Christmas' flood, no calamity of anything approaching the same magnitude has occurred. The work of repairing, strengthening, and improving the dikes was at last taken up in a thorough and practical manner. The lessons of bitter experience have been used, and the dike of to-day is as near perfection as is possible. The whole structure is mapped out into parts, over each of which a searching and unceasing outlook is kept. The first sign of weakness is detected, and the necessary repairs immediately carried out.

It might be thought that the inhabitants of a land held so precariously, who have to offer a constant and unrelaxing resistance to the rapacity of the sea, would be content to do this successfully, satisfied to retain their own. The struggle is, however, vigorously carried into the aggressor's camp. Day by day, and foot by foot, the lost acres are being won. Since the thirteenth century in East Friesland alone, about five hundred square miles have at one time or another been torn away by storm and flood. On the other hand, three hundred square miles of cultivable soil have been added to this province, and this new land is, by the nature of its constituent elements, the most fertile in the country.

The composition of this new soil and the processes of its formation and deposit are subjects upon which there are some differences of opinion, but the most generally accepted theory is that embodied below. Twice a day the tide visits the coast, and at each visit leaves behind it a deposit

of solid matter, which settles on the foreshore. This substance is, according to one writer, the product of the meeting and mixing of the fresh water coming from the land through the 'Siele,' or locks which drain the ground, with the salt water of the North Sea. Analysis of the latter shows—owing, it is surmised, to the existence of extensive submarine beds of clay, calcareous earth, &c., in the vicinity of the coast—an abnormal amount of solid constituents. The deposit, however created, is extremely rich. It occurs most plentifully round about the mouths of the rivers and canals, and on those parts of the shore where vegetation is found, being caught and retained by the stems and branches of the plants. The efforts of the inhabitants are directed towards increasing the amount of this deposit, or, rather, towards retaining the greatest possible quantity of it. With this object, parallel rows of stakes are driven into the foreshore, outside, and running out at right angles to the existing dike. These stakes are connected and bound together by willow branches and twigs, the whole forming an enormous silt trap, which catches and keeps the tide's deposits.

Day by day, inch by inch, this material is increased and solidifies until it raises itself to the level of the tide. After a time a straggling vegetation appears; and when the entire surface reaches this condition, and its extent warrants the expenditure, it is enclosed by a new dike, and another piece of recovered land is added to the balance in favour of man. Another method, largely practised, is that of digging long trenches parallel to the shore, into which the deposit falls, to be subsequently shovelled landwards.

The great encouragement to the work is the exceptionally fruitful character of the soil so brought under cultivation. In the year 1559 a farmer who sowed some of the reclaimed land with five tons of barley harvested no fewer than three hundred tons. There are portions of the soil which have been ploughed and used for two hundred years without having been once manured, and still yield excellent results. The 'polders,' as the newly-won districts are called, are far and away the richest parts of the country, and to this fact is to be attributed the great prosperity of the farmers and graziers of these provinces. The present polders form an almost unbroken fringe, varying in depth, round the coast, the outline of which their increase is slowly but continually altering.

The process is of course a very gradual one; but when, as nowadays, the contest is all one-sided, and nothing is lost, while each day something is won, the increase of land is not inconsiderable. The enterprising spirit of the nineteenth century is not, however, to be confined to the methods of past ages, nor to be satisfied with the results which sufficed for earlier generations.

In essaying to enclose and drain the Zuider Zee—a task the magnitude of which can best be appreciated by a glance at the map—the Dutch prove themselves well abreast of the times. Three plans have been put forward, the most daring and comprehensive of which proposed to connect the chain of islands, Texel, Vlieland, Terschelling, and Ameland with each other, and with the mainland, by means of short dikes, a plan which on the map looks feasible enough, and,

considering the shortness of the dikes required, comparatively inexpensive. In this view, however, the projectors were greatly mistaken. The waters of the North Sea pour through the narrow openings between the islands with such force and fury that the channel beds have been worn to a great depth. Any attempt to dike these openings would not only be terribly expensive, but would probably end in failure.

The second scheme was much more modest. By it the small island Urk, in the middle of the Zee, was to be connected on the west with Enkhuizen, and on the east with the coast near the mouth of the Yssel. This plan was generally approved of as a preliminary measure; but before any real step could be taken, a fresh project was put forward which seemed to hit the happy medium between the two extremes, and has now been finally decided upon. By this project the island Wieringen is to be connected by a short dike with the west mainland, and on the opposite side by a longer dike with the coast of West Friesland, enclosing an area of some fourteen hundred square miles.

The longer dike will at first be a low one, in order that the ebb and flow of the tide over the enclosed area, while being diminished in speed and force, will not be entirely checked. A low and slowly moving tide facilitates the deposit of solid matter. With this fact in view, it is confidently anticipated that the low dike will initiate a mutual action and reaction, the retardation of the tide increasing the deposit, and gradually raising the bed of the Zee; the latter, in its turn, with every increase in height offering a greater resistance to the inflowing water, and by reducing its force, still further increase the deposit. By this operation the work will be carried on, so to say, automatically, until a certain level has been reached. When this stage is attained, the dike will be raised and solidified, and the work of draining the reclaimed land entered upon. This will be brought about by 'poldering,' a process already described, from which centuries of experience have removed the difficulties, and by means of which all the reclaimed lands on the coasts of East and West Friesland have been won. It is not to be expected that the land will ever reach a higher or even the same level as the neighbouring sea. Indeed, in rainy seasons the assistance of powerful pumping machinery will be indispensable for drainage purposes; and in places where the present bed of the Zuider Zee is very deep, small lakes must remain. Along the top of the dike, a railway will be constructed, establishing a means of speedy transit from one extremity of the country to the other, which will be not the least of the advantages of the project.

Turning to the financial side of the question, we find the estimate for the total outlay slightly exceeds sixteen millions sterling. For this sum a tract of land of about twelve hundred square miles, equal in area to one-tenth part of the entire present kingdom, peculiarly rich and fertile in quality, will be added to the food-producing soil of the country. Should the reclaimed land only realise fifty pounds per acre, a very modest estimate, the result will be a gain of considerably more than cent. per cent. on the outlay.

The future economical and political advantages

of the undertaking can scarcely be over-estimated. The Dutch are approaching the task with their customary phlegm and tranquillity. One hears little about it outside Holland, yet, whatever comes or goes, it must take rank as one of the greatest enterprises of modern days.

THE SQUIRE'S DILEMMA.

CHAPTER IV.

THE result was that both Mr Godfrey and Mr Purvey came to dinner; and they all talked of this business they were interested in with lively, if sometimes pensive, expectation. The Squire pathetically regretted that coal-mining with its attendant industries 'make such a mess of the country'; but he recalled that not many hundreds of years ago all those regions were littered with charcoal-burning and iron-smelting, when the forests around were cut down, and the seat of the iron manufacture of England was in their midst; and Mr Purvey, with a business-like precision, remarked that the earth was made for man and not man for the earth, and that it is the duty of man to attend to his business.

Mr Godfrey said nothing to either of these views, except that he had always thought, and would maintain, that the industries of civilisation were conducted with far too much waste—reckless waste of both energy and material—and that carefully managed they need make very little 'mess.' And the best was that he and Miss Langland seemed to understand and sympathise with each other. The talk, you see, was more serious than dinner-talk commonly is, but there was a strong flavour of gratitude in it—gratitude of the French cynic's variety, which is inspired by the hope of favours to come. After dinner, however, they were all in lighter vein. Mr Purvey told the Squire engrossing tales of 'business'—in which the Squire took an unusual interest—of difficulties encountered and overcome, and of the supreme glories of twenty and thirty per cent.; and Mr Godfrey talked with the two girls, and played and sang with them in a most engaging manner—so that, when the evening came to an end and the girls were gone to their room, the younger expressed her delight to the elder in this wise: 'Oh, isn't he a nice man, Kitty?—and handsome too?—Oh, I believe I *could* love him!'

Whereupon Kitty hugged her sister close to her bosom.

From that day dated a period of delightful, feverish anticipation. In a day or two all the arrangements and appurtenances for boring were removed from Mr Purvey's ground to the top field of the Fairfield Farm. When the operation had been set going, the Squire climbed the hill to have a look, and came upon that sulky guardian of the door whom he had met once before.

'Well, my friend,' said the genial Squire, 'boring again—eh?'

'Yes, sir—boring,' answered the man.

'Not boring for water this time, though—eh?' said the Squire, with a knowing smile.

'No, sir—only boring;' and he went on his way; but he paused, reflected a moment, and then turned to say: 'Sometimes you bores for one thing, and gits another.' And then he went stubbornly on his way again.

And the boring went on steadily from day to day; and day after day the Squire was there and his daughter, and Mr Godfrey, and sometimes Mr Purvey; and so beset and bothered was the guardian of the door that he was fain to write upon its outward face in great chalk letters, 'No Admittance Except on Business.' But that did not deter his visitors from entering, and from examining with the supremest interest every cylinder of 'core' that was shown. This was such a soil, that was such another; this was chalk, and that was chalk again, and a third was chalk still. These were very nice, Kitty said; but why was there no coal yet? Mr Godfrey explained that coal could not possibly be reached for a certain depth, not until certain strata or layers of other things had been bored through; and Kitty admired his great but unassuming knowledge, and his serene patience and hope.

What made the expectation of the Squire and his daughter more feverish during this time was the impending necessity of making some kind of terms with Mr Purvey. The result of the Squire's visit to town had been an arrangement by which his friend Colonel Swetenham would buy up Purvey's mortgage with a mortgage of his own, provided that the Colonel's agent thought the farm carried value sufficient. The man had come down and looked over the farm, but as yet there had reached the Squire no definite 'Yea' or 'Nay.' And the Squire went to Mr Purvey to ask him to wait for some time longer before settling anything concerning either the mortgage or even its interest. Mr Purvey made no objection to that proposal.

'And of course,' observed the Squire, thinking it a civil and proper thing to say, 'we have not yet made the acquaintance of your son.'

The Squire was astonished at Mr Purvey's behaviour. He broke into an involuntary hiccup of a chuckle, smartly rubbed the knuckles of one hand in the palm of the other, smiled cheerfully to himself, and then smoothed out the smile with his lean fingers.

'But you will soon,' he said, at last looking at the Squire; 'I think I may say you will very soon.'

'What does the man mean by his smiles and chuckles?' thought the Squire, as he gazed upon him; but yet he suspected nothing, for he was occupied with the reiterated unwelcome promise of seeing Purvey's son—a prospect rendered more disagreeable than ever by the suspicion that his daughter had already conceived a liking for Mr Godfrey, who was now very frequently at the Manor House.

Both father and daughter therefore longed for the sight of coal; for that would determine the high value of the land, and in a moment resolve the complicated difficulty in which they were involved.

And at length the coal came—came in the shape of a small cylinder of compressed black powder, granulate and sparkling. The Squire and his daughter had waited more than an hour past luncheon-time to see it produced, and when they saw it they could have wept tears of joy. There was the fulfilment (in little) of all their hopes: the Squire saw himself disembarassed of debt, saw his lands again flourishing and productive, his favourite breed of pigs taking prizes at all the shows, and his dear daughter married to the man of her heart; and Kitty saw the necessity for parsimonious housekeeping gone, her father once more rosy and hearty, every one happy around her, and she herself happy—with whom? She glanced gratefully at Mr Godfrey, and experienced a strong desire to fling her arms about his neck. It was like the charm in the nursery story of the Old Woman and her Pig, the discovery of which set all the wheels of her existence going again smoothly and merrily.

'And we have you to thank for it!' exclaimed Kitty, impulsively giving Mr Godfrey her hand, and then blushing for her forwardness.

Mr Godfrey took her hand, gave it a tender, thrilling pressure, and blushed too.

'Don't think too much of this,' said he, however, in a tone of discreet warning: 'this is but the first show, and we may find that the measure is shallow and not worth the expense of working.'

But they did not heed him. They thought it was only his cautious, scientific way—merely 'his joke'; and they went home to eat their modest luncheon, radiant with content, and with the bloom of hope.

And now hear how the situation was precipitated.

The Squire wrote at once to his friend, Colonel Swetenham, telling of the momentous discovery, and saying that there could now be no doubt of the value of the farm, and that he would be glad if 'that business of the mortgage' could be carried through at once. That done, he felt as if the business *had* been carried through; and he rose in the mood to go at once and cast off Mr Purvey and all his works. But he probably would not have gone then had not some words from his daughter determined him.

'Oh, how I should like, father,' she exclaimed, with a quick flush—she had been in an excited, tremulous condition between red and white ever since the momentous discovery—'how I should like to run straight away to Mr Purvey and tell him that he must not think of me in connection with his son any more! I can't bear that he should have that connection in his mind one minute after I can help it!'

She was quite sure of herself, and sure also of Mr Godfrey; but even if she were not sure of him, she was certain that, having known him, she could never decline to the lower range of Mr Purvey's vulgar son.

'Why not, my dear?—why not?' exclaimed her father, rubbing his hands.

'No, father!' she said, in a sudden but evanescent impulse of shame and shyness. 'But shall we both go?—and—and you can tell him! Yes, let us go, and have done with it!'

So these two simple, unbusiness-like creatures set off incontinently to tell Mr Purvey that they could not entertain his proposal concerning his son on any account.

The nearer they got to the concrete villa the difficulty of delivering himself with perfect civility rose more and more upon the Squire. His steps lagged a little, and birds in the trees and beasts in the fields made him stop and expend an unusual amount of speculation on them: he would have liked to turn back, but he went obstinately on. At length they reached the concrete villa, and inquired for Mr Purvey. He was at home, and they were ushered into the Purveyan drawing-room—on Kitty's account, no doubt.

That drawing-room was Kitty's abhorrence. She had seldom sat in it, yet it always typified for her the abomination of desolation of taste: the contrasts of green rep and yellow satin and other crudities made her shudder. On this occasion, however, she had little time to shudder. Mr Purvey appeared with great promptitude, and a very polite, though somewhat astonished, welcome.

'It is seldom you do an old man this honour, Miss Langland,' said he.

'Well, you see, Mr Purvey,' began the Squire, rather ill at ease, shifting about as if his seat were extremely uncomfortable.

'Try this chair,' said Mr Purvey, offering him another.

'Thank you, thank you,' said the Squire; 'this will do very well: we must not be staying long.' And he finally established himself where he was. 'We have just come, Mr Purvey—we suddenly thought we would like to—on a semi-private, and—and rather delicate matter.'

Mr Purvey all the while was bowing and smiling in gentle assent to all the Squire said, looking in ignorant wonder from him to his daughter. On the hint that there was something to be uttered of a 'semi-private' nature, he rose and asked Miss Langland if she would not like to look at a book of photographs on a table a pace or two off. Kitty took that remoter station, heartily wishing she had never come, and Purvey returned to listen to the Squire.

'Yes?' said he, clasping his hands in patient expectation.

'Well,' began the Squire, with a little constrained laugh, and in a low tone, which gradually rose to its normal level, 'my daughter is troubled by the—er—a proposal of yours, Mr Purvey, which I have communicated to her; it has worried and bothered her very much, especially of late. You—er—did me the honour, Mr Purvey, a little while ago, to suggest that we might accomplish an alliance between your son and my daughter.'

'I did make such a proposal,' said Mr Purvey, now quite alert; 'and you replied, Mr Langland, that you could say nothing to it until Miss Langland and my son should know each other.'

'I made that reply—yes,' said the Squire.

'But—well, perhaps I was foolish in telling my daughter your proposal; and, you know, Mr Purvey, there is nothing the female heart so much resents as having its affections arranged for.'

'Undisciplined!' murmured Mr Purvey gently, 'unchastened!'

'Well,' said the Squire, becoming obstinate, and by that token more at ease, 'perhaps so. But there the fact is; and the more she thinks of it and looks forward to it, the more the prospect displeases and distresses her. And—and now, Mr Purvey, she has asked me to come to you to thank you for the honour you have done her, but also to beg you to think of her in—in that light no longer. Besides,' said the Squire, dropping his voice, and feeling the advantage of a show of confidence, 'I believe—I have reason to think that she has bestowed her—er—affections on another.'

'Very likely,' replied Mr Purvey, also in a low voice.

The next moment the Squire sat surprised at the demeanour of Mr Purvey, and even Miss Langland raised her face from her book of photographs in astonishment. It could scarcely be said that Mr Purvey had laughed; for every muscle of his face was as gently and sweetly disposed in seriousness as usual. But certainly Mr Purvey had uttered a strange sound, something like a snigger, and yet more like the pleasant noise with which a horse welcomes the approach of his feed of corn.

'But in spite of that,' continued Mr Purvey at once, pinching his fingers in rapid succession, as if to make sure they were there, complete in number and condition, 'perhaps my son might have some chance, if he only had the pleasure of making Miss Langland's acquaintance.'

That reply was so unexpected, that the Squire gazed upon Mr Purvey and said not a word.

'I am not the man—God forbid!'—added Mr Purvey—'to come between any man and his affianced—a—young lady; but this person at whose existence you hint may be only a—casual interloper.—I beg,' said Mr Purvey, suddenly rising, 'that you will permit me to introduce my son to you and Miss Langland.'

'What?' exclaimed the Squire. 'Has he arrived, then?'

'Oh yes,' said Mr Purvey—and again there was that sound between a snigger and what Scots people call a 'nicher'—'he has arrived—arrived quite unexpectedly.'

The latter portion of this talk had been overheard by Miss Langland. She now closed her book of photographs, stood erect, and came towards Mr Purvey, with shame and entreaty striving together on her beautiful ingenuous face. 'Please, Mr Purvey,' she said, 'not now!—another time!—we must not stay!—we must go home!—Pray, excuse me now, Mr Purvey!'

In her eagerness she had laid her hand on Mr Purvey's arm to detain him. 'My dear young lady,' said Mr Purvey very impressively, 'if you do not let me make this introduction now, you—you will regret it!'

'Mr Purvey!' exclaimed the Squire in a temper closely bordering on anger. 'Do you permit yourself to threaten us?'

'Threaten you, my dear sir?' exclaimed Mr

Purvey in amazed innocence. 'Not at all!—not the least in the world!—Permit me.'

And ere either could say another word to detain him he was gone.

'CAXTON'—HUNTING.

THE heart of a violinist may be thrown into rapture by the discovery, in some out-of-the-way corner, of a genuine Stradivarius. But the rapture of the violinist is nothing compared with the ecstasy a bibliophile experiences when he finds an unknown book printed by Caxton and embedded in the dust of a forsaken college library. No wonder, for the value of Caxtons has increased marvellously during recent years. Not long ago, a book which came from the press of England's first printer fetched three thousand pounds. Although there are a considerable number of his prints about, not a single copy of many of his publications can be found. Editions, however, which have been despaired of by the hunter have turned up in the most unexpected manner. The late William Blades used to tell how he spent the time during a service in searching the library at the French Protestant Church, St Martin's-le-Grand. As with dusty face and grimed hands he was departing, a filthy bit of parchment in a pigeon-hole close to the fire attracted his attention by the appearance it presented of an illuminated initial. He turned it aside with his foot; and beneath was an old folio, the first sight of which made his heart beat. It seemed impossible, and yet it was a genuine Caxton, the second edition of Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales,' with numerous woodcuts. But how shorn of its beauty! True, original binding of nearly four centuries ago was there; but out of the three hundred and twelve leaves originally enclosed within the boards, scarcely two hundred were left, and they were torn and dirty. However, said Blades, it was a good hour's work; and the precious relic, each leaf of which was worth a guinea, was saved from lighting any more vestry fires.

It is in this way a large proportion of the known Caxtons have been unearthed. Probably, after years of searching, the long-sought-for book is obtained quite accidentally. Richard Heber, the sale of whose libraries in Paris, Brussels, London, Antwerp, Louvain, Leyden, and at the Hague occupied two hundred and two days, spent a large part of his life looking for a print by Colard Mansion, the first printer in Bruges. His efforts were not fruitful; but his brother, who was Bishop of Calcutta, managed to purchase a fine copy from a native on the banks of the Ganges. Caxton's 'Fifteen Oes,' now in the British Museum, lay for centuries in the dust of an old country-house. Henry Bradshaw of Cambridge, who was one of the most indefatigable of book-hunters, found an Indulgence, printed by Caxton, pasted inside a book in the Bedford town library. There are several

Caxtons in the Baptist Chapel at Bristol; and the famous vellum Caxton was found in a Roman Catholic seminary. Second-hand dealers are nowadays pretty sharp; but it is within the range of possibility to pick up a Caxton at a bookstall. Kind-hearted old Osborne, when he bought the Harleian collection, found he had fifty-six Caxtons at one time in his shop. To get rid of them, without any regard as to their rarity, he sold them at a fixed price—all folios twenty-one shillings; all quartos fifteen shillings. Sir Walter Scott makes Monkbarne tell the story of how 'Snuffly Davie'—who was David Wilson, a once well-known bookseller—bought for two-pence from a stall in Holland 'the Game of Chess' (1474), which was the first book ever printed in England. It was afterwards sold for one hundred and seventy pounds. Some years ago, in a cathedral town, a second-hand bookseller exposed a copy of Caxton's Statutes affixing a card, 'Only 2s. 6d.' For some time it lay unnoticed. One day, however, the attention of a gentleman was attracted, and he, knowing something about early printing, soon became the owner of the book. He valued it more than its weight in bank-notes.

Is it possible to find any more Caxtons? will be the question cropping up in the mind of the reader. Undoubtedly. The difficulty, however, is to distinguish the genuine article when it is seen. This, however, can be easily overcome. Let the Caxton-hunter remember one or two things. He will never find one of Caxton's books with a title-page. Title-pages were unknown till after 1491. There must be no Roman or italic lettering, but all in Gothic or Old English. There must be no commas, but an oblique stroke in their place. Further, there must be no catch-words at the bottom of a page. The use of these, long gone out of fashion, did not come into vogue till years after Caxton's death. There are other tests necessary, such as the measurement of lines, for some of the type used was imitated pretty closely by Caxton's successors. It is clear, however, that during his career Caxton only used six kinds of type. The first, distinctly foreign in its character, was used by him at Bruges in the printing of 'The Recuyell of the Histories of Troye,' and in the first edition of 'The Game and Playe of the Chesse.' This style was never used in England. The second style, such as in 'The Moral Proverbs,' and 'Tulle of Olde Age,' printed in 1477 and 1481 respectively, was beautiful and artistic. It follows a design of manuscript which obtained the name of Gros Batarde, common in use in the fifteenth century. Several books were written in this manner under the order of Edward IV., and are now to be seen in the British Museum. Looking at the dates when Caxton's books were issued and the types he used, it is evident he did not make new type till the old was worn out. A pretentious style came next in 1483, very bold in its character. It is problematical whether there is a book in this type; the only examples we have of it at present are in headlines. With a little

previous study, the Caxton-hunters could at a glance recognise these three styles.

It would not, however, be so easy respecting the type used in 'Polychronicon,' 'Death-bed Prayers,' and 'The Book of Fame.' This is very closely followed by printers of a subsequent date. As far as is known, very few books are in the style of 'The Royal Book,' published in 1485. The pattern is somewhat Dutch; but among other books in which it is used is 'The Book of Good Manners.'

The last style of type Caxton employed was small, and not being imitated so much by other printers, would be fairly easy to recognise. Trade-marks were in use in the early days of printing just as they are now, and Caxton in some of his later prints put a mark. To find this trade-mark in a book is not a guarantee he printed it, for his successors adopted in their publications one rather like it. It is, however, comparatively easy to distinguish the imitation.

Some of the most important of Caxton's works are yet to be found. There is not a known book of his printed in 1486 and 1488. It is not likely he ceased printing during these two years. We know there are missing books because Caxton himself in the preface to 'The Golden Legende' mentions 'XV bookes of Metamorphoseos in whyche ben conteyned the fables of Ouyde,' but about which nothing whatever is known. Neither has anything been discovered of his translation of 'The Lyfe of Robert Erle of Oxenford.' There are indications of the mania again coming upon us of collecting old editions, just as in our youth we spend all our pocket-money in foreign and rare stamps. At the commencement of the century there was a great demand for ancient volumes, but the fever gradually died out. There is an historical interest in finding out Caxtons. It is not the 'dead rubbish of a dead generation' we are dealing with when we turn over the leaves of the 'Knight of the Tower' or the 'Confessio Amantis.' In these days of excellence, it is refreshing to turn to the rude letters, the irregular pages, the want of initial letters, and so on. At the end of his translation of 'The History of Troy' we are told Caxton's eyes 'were dimmed with overmuch looking on the white paper; that his courage was not so prone and ready to labour as it had been; and that age was creeping on him daily and enfeebling his body: that he had practised and learnt at his great charge and expense to ordain this said book in print after the manner and form as we see it; and that it was not written with pen and ink as other books be.' It was quite usual for the early printers to put something of this kind at the end of their books. For instance, Faust and Schoffer of Mentz stated their works 'were not drawn or written by a pen, as all books had been before, but made by a new art and invention of printing, or stamping them by characters or types of metal set in forms.'

However much we may crave after Caxton's books in this latter end of the nineteenth century, some of the dignitaries did not look upon the innovation of printing with kindly eyes four hundred years ago. Bishop Bale suggestively referred to Caxton as a 'man not quite stupid, nor benumbed with sloth.' The rummager amongst old books will be very glad if even after

several years' searching he brings to the light a genuine Caxton. They are not in every garret, but there must be copies in many garrets, being eaten by the worms and slowly destroyed by the damp. May they soon be rescued!

A TALE OF A DARTMOOR FOG.

My grandfather, Jacob Brewer, of Stitchworthy, near Chagford, Devon, had but one remarkable episode in his long life. Such as it was, however, it must have made a very great impression on him. He was a farmer of a class now extinct, or nearly so, in England, owning, as his ancestors had owned for several generations, the estate of Stitchworthy, on Dartmoor. He had at the time I speak of attained the dignity of a Justice of the Peace, and being possessed of a superior education to the general run of 'country justices' in those days, acquitted himself with much credit, and had sent his son to study the law at Exeter.

It fell out that one day, in the beginning of September 1813, he had occasion to visit the fair at Widdicombe, renowned in Devonshire song. My grandfather having concluded a bargain for certain sheep, was invited by the seller, as the one inn was crammed to suffocation, to come to his house near by to clench the bargain in the time-honoured way. They fell to talk of things agricultural, and then of the war, somewhat regardless of time, till at length the tall kitchen clock startled my grandfather by slowly clanging four.

'Hallo!' he exclaimed, starting up; 'I never thought it was so late. I should have been half-way back by now;' and taking a hasty leave of his host, he mounted his famous chestnut mare Jenifer (west-country for Guinevere), rode up a steep stony lane which brought him to the open moor, and ascended the slopes of Hamil Down. Now Hamil Down, or Hamildon, is a gigantic ridge of granite some three miles long, forming one side of the vale of Widdicombe. Its wide level top is seventeen hundred feet above the sea; and the view from the great barrow which marks its centre is as strange and picturesque as one as can be found in England. Almost due west, on the horizon at the foot of a rounded hill, were some whitish patches; these were the great prison barracks of Princetown, where many hundreds of prisoners of war were kept. My grandfather reflected on this with no other feeling than one of deep gratitude to Providence that they were safely bestowed there, instead of working their will on his person and property.

As he proceeded, there lay right below him, in a deep scoop of the down between two tors, what seemed a huge 'fairy ring' on the boggy ground. This was Grimspound, supposed to be an ancient fort, and consisting of a rude embankment of great boulders and earth, overgrown with bracken. My grandfather proceeded to ride through it, and just as he passed the entrance, Jenifer shied, and a man suddenly rose from the ditch, and stood, apparently undecided whether to run or not. He was a well-made, good-looking young fellow of about seven-and-twenty, of very dark complexion, in seaman's attire, dirty and muddy, as from rough travelling, and there was a dark patch or stain on his coat on the left side. He stood for

a minute with a half-alarmed, half-savage expression on his face—which often revisited my grandfather in his dreams—before he spoke.

'Beg your honour's pardon,' he said; 'but I took you for a highwayman, and thought it best to keep out of sight if I could.'

'Highwayman, indeed!' said my grandfather. 'Not a very likely place to meet one, where there are no highways.—But what are you doing here?'

'That's easily told, your honour,' said the sailor, with an air of more confidence. 'I'm a sailor, as you see, mate of the brig *Nereus*, from Jamaica to Plymouth. We came into port last week; and I went to Tavistock first, to see some friends, and then started to tramp across to Teignmouth, where my home is; but trying a short-cut I was told of, I've got clean out of my reckoning. If your honour could put me on the track, it would be a favour.'

'Humph!' said my grandfather. 'If you are for Teignmouth, you have a longish walk yet; and you'll never find your way to Moreton tonight.—Look here, my man; you seem an honest fellow. If you follow me, you can have a supper and a shake-down in the barn, and reach Chagford as early as you like in the morning. Though there are no highwaymen about, there are fellows whose room is better than their company on the Moor at night.'

'Much obliged to your honour,' said the sailor, picking up a stick and bundle, such as men of his calling generally travelled with ashore.

'You seem to have been hurt,' said my grandfather, eyeing the stain on the man's coat.

'Yes, your honour; we had a brush with a Yankee privateer just after leaving Kingston. We beat her off; but I got a poke with a boarding-pike, and it's not healed yet.'

They had proceeded but a short distance, when a horseman appeared coming towards them, in whom my grandfather recognised his 'hind' or bailiff, Johnny Truscott.

'The mistress hev sent me out to look for 'ee, Squire,' said he as he rode up. 'She do be terrible oneasy about 'ee all day. Some of they pris'ners got away last night; we heard 'm shootin' off signal-guns up to Princetown. You hev'n't surely catched one of 'm?' as he noticed the not very reputable plight of the young sailor.

'No; not this time,' said my grandfather.—'But what do you see, Johnny?' for he was gazing hard towards Grimspound.

'Two men, Squire, lookin' at us over the far side o' the pound. They've dropped down now; but I seen 'm so plain as the nose on your face. Shall us go an' look at 'm, sir?—maight be some o' they pris'ners.'

'No,' said my grandfather, after consideration. 'If they are, I don't quite see how we are going to capture them without arms.—You see—to the sailor—the bad company I told you of was nearer than we thought.'

'Drat they pris'ners!' said Truscott; 'I wish they'd take an' smother the lot in Cranmere so fast as they catches 'm.'

Ere long they had reached my grandfather's homestead; and consigning the stranger to the care of Truscott, my grandfather entered the house.

Stitchworthy stood on a rising ground between

two moorland streams. South and east were fields, studded with granite bosses, and enclosed by granite walls thick-grown with fern and fox-glove; but north and west was the primeval Moor, and, overlooking all, Kestor with its grim square fort-like summit. The house itself, a massive stone building with a seventeenth-century date over the door, formed one side of a terribly 'mucky' farmyard, the other sides consisting of cowsheds and farm-buildings.

'Jacob, how came you to be so careless as to leave your pistols behind?' demanded my grandmother.—'And who's that you've brought with you?'

My grandfather related the story in as few words as possible, while struggling out of his boots.

His wife seemed but half satisfied. 'Well, Jacob, of course you couldn't leave the man to get lost; but since he came so far, he might just as well have gone to Chagford.'

'I don't see that, my dear. Four miles of as bad a track as ever called itself a road, to go over in the dark, and perhaps those two fellows on the watch for him.'

'It's no use my talking, I know, Jacob; but you ought to be more careful, now you're a Justice, and not believe every plausible tale that vagabonds tell you.—I'm sure we're getting to be a regular house of call for them, and the people you take on at harvest keep me in a twitter till they're off the place.'

'There's no occasion to twitter about the sailor, my dear. You won't see him again.—Let's have supper, please, for I'm rather sharp set.'

During the progress of the meal, frequent sounds of merriment reached their ears from the direction of the men's quarters, as if the visitor were making himself entertaining; but early hours were then the rule, and by half-past eight every one was, or was supposed to be, asleep.

About ten, my grandfather was awakened by his wife shaking him; and sitting up in bed, he was aware of a great disturbance among the dogs. The big mastiff had set up a thundering baying; old Ranter, the Exmoor staghound, joined in with his deep-mouthed music; and 'the little dogs and all' added a chorus, rousing the geese into frantic screechings. In some annoyance, he hustled on the most necessary garments, and loading a ponderous double flintlock, which would have made a modern sportsman's back ache to look at, made his way down-stairs and into the yard. Truscott, two labourers, and the sailor were already in the yard, and the forces, human and canine, sallied out. Dividing into two parties, they made a circuit of the premises; but when they met, no one had seen anything. The Moor lay black around in the shadow of Longridge and Kestor, save where the stone walls showed ivory white in the moonlight, and no sound could be heard except the brook rattling over its stony bed. Presently the distant hoot of a tawny owl broke the stillness, then another in answer, seemingly close by. The dogs growled and sniffed the air inquiringly. A thick bank of cloud was beginning to draw over the moon. Something was said about 'piskies,' and it was evident that neither Truscott nor the men cared about getting out of sight of the house.

'It's too bad, it is,' said my grandfather, 'to

be dragged out of bed in this way, an' not even get a shot.'

'Shoot thicky owl, Squire,' said the younger of the men, grinning.

'What do you mean, Sam?' said my grandfather.

'Gypsies do call to aich other laike owls at night, Squire. Just 'fore you comed back, or it might be a hour, I zee dree on 'em crassin' the Moor to'ards Vitifer.'

'There's been a braave lot of 'm camped over to Belstone, since Okehampton cattle fair, so I heard,' said the other man.

Now, my grandfather, though, as we have seen, not inclined to be hard on masterless men in general, made an exception in the case of gypsies, to whom he had as great an aversion as an Australian squatter to 'myall blacks.' It was with some irritation that he observed to Truscott: 'Those were the men you saw, no doubt. I wonder what they were watching us for? No good, of course.'

'Tis little enough good they have about 'em,' said Truscott.—'Reckon, Jack, he added, addressing the sailor, 'twas lucky for 'ee Squire and I happened to come up.'

The rest of the night passed without event; and in the morning, my grandfather, having rather overslept himself, found Truscott awaiting orders.

'He's clane gone, Squire. Sam slept in the loft with 'm an' never heard 'm go; but 'tis aisier to wake a hedgybow [hedgehog] at Christmas than to wake Sam.'

'Aw! but he were a funny chap! Tell 'ee what, Squire, he weren't such a stranger in these parts as what he do make out.'

'What makes you think so?'

'Cause,' replied Truscott, 'we never had to say nothin' over again to 'm, same as we does to a foreigner, or even a Plymouth or a Exeter man.'

At this minute Sam came up, and, touching his hat, held out something. 'Found this in the straw, Squire, where thicky sailor chap laid las' night,' said he, exhibiting a round metal box, such as was then used instead of a tobacco pouch, having scratched on it a rude likeness of an eagle and the letters G. D.

'Right, Sam,' said my grandfather, weighing it in his hand. 'Silver, too. He'll most likely come back for it. If he does, John, tell him to ask the mistress for it;' and having given sundry directions and hastily breakfasted, he mounted and set off for the meet of the otter hounds at Post Bridge. When the sport was over, my grandfather returned to Post Bridge with most of the mounted contingent, amongst whom were several officers of the Princetown guard. As they rode on, scraps of conversation reached his ears which caused him to listen with more attention.

'When the winter sets in, there won't be much chance for escapes.'

'If I were in his place, I should pray for an early one. He'll be superseded if many more get away.'

'I doubt if the fellow will be caught. He must know the country, and there are too many tramping sailors about for him to attract much notice.'

'Is it a prisoner you are talking about, gentlemen?' said my grandfather. 'Perhaps I can give you some information;' and he recounted the events of the previous day.

'That's the man, without doubt,' said the officer addressed. 'A renegade, sir, one of the crew of the Yankee brig *Pocahontas*, who've given us more trouble than all the rest. The night before last, he and a dozen more got out by digging under the wall, bound and gagged a sentry, though he says he got his bayonet into this fellow; and as yet only six have been caught. His name is George Dousland, as we found out by means of an uncle of his who lives at Tavistock, and who recognised him at the market. The old man nearly went into a fit with rage, for this scoundrel had formerly robbed and nearly killed him.'

'Well, gentlemen,' said my grandfather, 'it's my duty as a Justice to assist you; and if you will send a party to my place, I will put you on the track, as far as I can.'

'Very good, Mr Brewer,' said the officer. 'I'm afraid they could hardly get there to-day in time to do any good; but you may expect them early in the morning.'

On arrival at Post Bridge, the military cantered off towards Princetown, and the rest turned into the inn for a parting glass before going their ways. Amongst them was Hannaford, the host of the *Three Crowns* at Chagford, who had heard what had passed.

'Aw dear!' he exclaimed to my grandfather, when they were sitting in the inn parlour, 'to think o' Jarge Dousland comin' to this.'

'You know him, then?'

'Iss, Squire. I knew'd him well to Tavistock eight year agone, an' his uncle ould Hendry too; but what I never knew'd was the man that had a good word to say for him—the uncle, I mean. This boy, this Jarge Dousland, came to live with him when he was about fifteen. Ould Hendry used him cruel bad first along; but latterly he found 'twas no use; he cudn't make him do anythin' he didn't want to do. He wudn't do no work at the mill, nor nowhere, without he had a fancy; an' he was allus roamin' the country an' soshiatin' with poachers an' gypsies an' such like. Last, when he were about twenty year old, one night ould Hendry thought he heard thieves, an' goes down an' finds Jarge along with a gypsy; an' the short of it was ould Hendry got pretty near killed afore help comed. I reckon it didn't come too quick either, for his men weren't fonder of him than other folks. Jarge wasn't to be heard of next day; an' though there was a 'sa't-an'-buttery warrant out, 'twas no good, for he'd got to Plymouth, an' was to sea on a king's ship long before his uncle cud see out of his eyes.—That was spring of the year Lord Nelson died; an' till to-day, I never heard word of him.'

My grandfather was very wroth at hearing these particulars. The ships of the American navy, which had inflicted several reverses on us, were very largely, in some cases entirely, manned by British deserters. That he himself should have given aid and assistance to one of them seemed a personal disgrace. 'If it had been a Frenchman, or even a real Yankee,' he soliloquised as he rode home, 'I shouldn't have cared so much.

But an English renegade! It shan't be my fault if they don't catch him, if I lose another day. The worst of it is, I shall never hear the last of it from the wife.' And indeed he never did.

Next morning, the weather had changed, and a westerly breeze was sending heavy clouds rolling across the Moor, sweeping its surface with ragged curtains of mist and fine rain. My grandfather had come in from superintending a haystack which was getting heated, and was breakfasting in the kitchen, where provision had been made for the expected officer and men from Princetown. Suddenly, Ranter got up and trotted growling to the door; the gate clashed, and a trample of hoofs, with a clink and jingle, was heard approaching.

'Here they are!' he exclaimed. 'Get the flask filled, my dear, and the big cloak; yes, and the pistols, and a blunderbuss, and a cutlass, and all Robinson Crusoe's outfit, if it will make you any easier in your mind. Tell Sam to saddle the gray; I won't risk Jenifer among the mires;' and he issued forth to meet the party. They consisted of an officer, who introduced himself as Lieutenant Macmorris, four dragoons, and a civilian, who, my grandfather instinctively felt, must be no other than Hendry. He felt disgusted with the conduct of a man who could thus come out to hunt his own nephew, however bad he may have been.

'Good-morning, Lieutenant,' said my grandfather. 'Come in and get something to eat, you and your men.'

The person introduced as Mr Hendry was a tall, wiry man of fifty or so, with hard gray eyes under bushy eyebrows, and a very long upper lip. He was attired in the heavy boots and breeches and long-skirted coat of the period—all rather the worse for wear; and his steed, a vicious-looking black mare, seemed not to suffer from overfeeding or grooming. He bowed stiffly to Mrs Brewer, shook hands with my grandfather, and exclaimed with an affected jocularly which sat very ill on him: 'Well, sir, d'ye think we shall run him to earth? Scent's rather cold, hey?'

'Won't you sit down to breakfast?' said my grandfather. 'We may have a long ride before us, and a damp one.'

'To be sure, to be sure,' said Hendry; and seating himself opposite to the Lieutenant, who was making alarming ravages on the fried bacon, commenced eating with a great display of appetite. It was not long, however, before he pushed away his plate and exclaimed: 'Isn't it nearly time to start, Lieutenant?'

On being questioned by the officer, my grandfather gave it as his opinion that the runaway would most likely have made for the gypsy camp at Belstone.

'Iss, Squire,' said Truscott, who had entered. 'Twas they owls fled away with 'm, sure enough. Depend 'pon it, they chaps that we saw to the Pound was along with 'm when you comed on 'm, but he cudn't get away so quick as they.'

'I suppose that was it,' said my grandfather. 'But as to Belstone, I can show you a way there in about seven miles, but you will have to follow me close, for it's a rough track, and the mires are very soft just now.'

As soon as they were mounted—'Now,' said my grandfather, pointing with his whip to the

huge round bulk of Cawsand Beacon, looming through the mist, 'that hill is where we must make for, and—Hullo!' The exclamation was caused by the conduct of Hendry's mare, which no sooner felt her rider in the saddle, than, with a vicious jerk of her head, she got the bit in her teeth, and dashed off in the direction of Chagford, cannoning against my grandfather's old gray and nearly capsizing him. Though old Hendry sat firmly enough, it was only at a high stone wall that he could check her. 'Upon my word,' said my grandfather, rubbing his leg, as the runaway rejoined them, 'you must take care, Mr Hendry, that she doesn't play these tricks where we're going, or we may have the job of fishing you out of a mire.'

Hendry apologised to my grandfather, who replied: 'No harm done, sir; let's push on;' and the interrupted march was resumed.

The wind had died away, and the mist was gathering round with a fine drizzle as they paced over the scrubby heather of the granite-strewn Moor, now passing a circle of upright stones, rising gray and solitary from a hill-side, now an overthrown 'kistvaen,' and now a long double line of rough blocks leading nowhere. By-and-by the fog settled down in earnest; and when they gained the top, and drew rein to let the horses breathe, they could see little beyond one another and the ground they stood on.

It was indeed the thickest fog that my grandfather could remember in all his experience; and though it was near ten o'clock of a September day, and he knew well where he was, he had to proceed as carefully as if it had been midnight. Suddenly, a great pile of rocks appeared to start out of the fog.

'Ha! here's White Hill!' he exclaimed. 'We're only a little way out. To the right, and then straight on again, will get us there in an hour, or less.—Now, Mr Hendry, straight on after me, if you please.—Why, what do you see, man?'

Old Hendry, without heeding the question, had reined up, and was staring fixedly before him, with such an expression of concentrated rage on his hard-lined face, as, considering the absence of any cause for it, amazed the beholders.

Before the question could be repeated, he spoke in a low strained voice, without turning his head: 'There, there he is—running and mocking at us!'

No one spoke, but every one stared at the impenetrable white blank in front. Before another word could be said, the black mare plunged, threw up her heels, and horse and rider vanished like the picture on a lantern screen when the slide is pulled out.

My grandfather, who alone realised the danger, was speechless with dismay for an instant, then, clapping his hands to his mouth, bawled with all his might: 'To the right—to the right, man! Throw yourself off, if you can't stop her!'

The rapidly receding thud of hoofs in a mad gallop down hill was the only answer. To ride after would have been sheer insanity, for nothing could be seen ten yards off, and the ground was strewn with angular lumps of granite, hidden in the heather. How the mare kept her legs for an instant, was, my grandfather used to say, the

greatest mystery in the affair. Suddenly the sound ceased.

'He's stopped her,' said the Lieutenant.—'But hear that!' as a scream, harsh, thrilling, and fearfully prolonged, came ringing up from below. 'Tis the horse. Many's the time I've heard it in Spain.'

'He may have thrown himself off,' said my grandfather, wiping his face, which was damp with more than fog. 'The best way is to leave a man here with the horses, and go down in a line as far apart as we can see each other.'

They did so; and in a few minutes, one of the soldiers picked up Hendry's hat; but no further discovery was made; and presently the peat began to squash under their feet, and my grandfather called a halt.

'No farther,' said he, taking up a large stone and pitching it a few yards in front, where it disappeared with a gulping sound and a jelly-like quivering of the surface. 'I daren't try to skirt the pool in this weather. We must search up hill again to find him, if he is above ground, which I doubt.'

But when, after half an hour's searching and shouting, no traces were found, and they arrived at their starting-place, much to the relief of the man left with the horses, they came to the dismal conclusion that Hendry was beyond help, and that nothing remained but to proceed. Just as they moved off, the corporal exclaimed: 'Here he comes, sir!' as a horseman on a black horse broke through the fog; but next instant my grandfather recognised the rider as a man named Prowse, a Moorman, living at Belstone.

'What! is it you, Squire?' said he. 'What be doin' this side long o' they sajers, and what be all the scrachin' about?—Aw! but I were glad to hear it, for I'd got fair 'mazed; I never see the like o' this fog!'

'He be gone, right enough,' he remarked when he heard of the event. 'Same as Phairy in the Red Sea. The pool be that full now, a plover cudn't hardly settle on 'm. Gypsies? Iss, sure. There was a parcel o' them to Higher Tor; but they moved off this mornin'. Seem'th there was a chap with 'm, not one o' theirselves, a sort o' trampin' sailor, an' last night he died.' (My grandfather started.) 'They say as how he was hurted 'fore he comed to them, an' his wound broke out an' bled 'm to death in his sleep; but three on 'm 's in custody, an' the crowner is comin' from Okehampton for to hold a inquest.'

A breeze sprung up at this moment; the fog lifted considerably, and they were able to proceed more rapidly. Much discussion ensued. My grandfather owned that he had seen and heard nothing, neither had the Lieutenant; and, but for Hendry's strange speech and looks, it would have seemed merely a case of a bolting horse. But the corporal thought he saw 'something'; whereupon one of the men affirmed that he also saw 'summat,' but he thought 'it didn't look like a man;' which enabled another man to recollect hearing something 'like a voice callin'.'

When they reached the hamlet of Belstone, a little crowd of people were clustered about the one public-house, who raised a buzz of astonishment at the sight of the party. The Lieutenant having explained their errand, they were ushered

into a sort of barn at the back, where, on a table extemporised of planks on trestles, lay stiff, shrunk, and white, the remains of the luckless George Dousland. The three gypsies in custody were two men, and a woman, who sat crouched on a bench, her sullen black eyes fixed on the body.

The horses being quite knocked up, my grandfather offered the party his hospitality for the night. In the morning, he bethought him of the silver tobacco box, and being in some doubt whether it might not be considered spoil of war, he handed it to the Lieutenant, who accepted it with many thanks.

No trace of Hendry was ever found; but, years after, when the prison stood empty and deserted, my grandfather was called to Plymouth on legal business. As he walked on the Hoe, he encountered his former acquaintance, Lieutenant, now, thanks to the chances of war, Major Macmorris, who welcomed him with effusion, and insisted on taking him to his quarters in the Citadel. There he produced the box, flattened by a bullet as it lay in his waistcoat pocket at Waterloo, remarking: 'So you see, Mr Brewer, if that little excursion you took us was the death of one man, it was the means of saving the life of another.'

NEST-BUILDING EXTRAORDINARY.

THOSE who go Bird-nesting would scarcely be expected to look in spouts of pumps, hands of statues, interiors of letter-boxes in use, in street lamps, old shoes, hats, or still less in human skulls, to add to their egg-collections. Yet all such curious and fanciful selections have at times been made by feathered architects as sites for the erection of the temporary nurseries which are to guard their young ones. How the tender fledglings are reared, often under extraordinary disadvantageous circumstances, is amazing. A large number of birds, for example, conceived an affection for the newly-erected battle-ship *Victory*, in the Isle of Man Exhibition grounds, and built their nests there. Inside the figure-head, a pair of blackbirds started housekeeping, and four eggs soon lay in their soft nest. More curious still was it to find that a feathered pair had made their nest inside the tiny hull of a model ironclad, and liked the situation so much, that although the hull was overhauled and painted and carted on wheels to the lake-side, the attentive mother never deserted her eggs. What may be mentioned as a peculiar coincidence in connection with this part of our subject was the discovery of a robin's nest in the mizzen-mast of Nelson's ship, the *Victory*, part of which mast is still preserved in the grounds of Bushey House. It was shot right through at Trafalgar, and in the hole thus made a pair of robins built their nest and reared a brood of young ones.

Robins in particular seem fond of odd nesting-places. A nest with three eggs was lately extracted from one of the old George IV. lamps in St James's Park, London. Another of these birds had the audacity to build a nest in a black-

smith's shop close to where horses are shod, and hatched its eggs, undisturbed by the din of hammers or the flying sparks from the forge. Two other robins chose a paper bag which was hung up in a greenhouse in Buxton, built their nest in it, and reared six small robins therein, coming to and fro through a broken pane. Being regarded as a curiosity, the nest was preserved by skilfully propping the bag to support the weight. A veritable nest-tower, built by a pair of these birds, was once found by an egg-collector. As each attempt appeared to turn out unsatisfactory, one new nest after another was built over the last, till five were completed before this fastidious couple were contented to begin housekeeping.

Sparrows are proverbially audacious. Two recently reared their frail habitation in a railway signal-box, unmindful of the various noises resulting from shunting the trains. A train used to make a daily run carrying a blackbird's nest and eggs amongst the woodwork underneath one of the carriages. Upon unloading a railway wagon filled with limestone at St Helens, a nest with five perfect eggs was found which looked like a blackbird's. A similar find was made in a coal-wagon at Banbury. The nest had probably been carried from Cannock Chase pits, and must have bewildered the birds by its sudden disappearance. In a hole in one of the buffers of a railway carriage making daily excursions between Thorpe and Clacton-on-Sea, a tomtit made its nest and hatched the eggs, in spite of the frequent violent concussions when the carriage was shunted. These usually timid creatures appear to get as accustomed to shocks and loud noises as do people to earthquakes and hurricanes. Imagine any one looking for a nest in the ammunition box of a gun-carriage; yet a bird once built one there, nor was it frightened away by the daily firing of that weapon. Two sparrows which built in the slot of a railway signal-post were quite unconcerned at the moving up and down of the arms, which in consequence raised and lowered the nest as though it were on the waving branch of a tree.

Some men sawing through an elm-tree discovered in the middle of it a bird's nest containing five perfect eggs. The tree, fifteen inches in diameter, was quite sound except just round the nest, and is supposed to be more than one hundred years old. Another curiosity in this line was worthy of its place in the local museum, for it was a bird's nest made wholly of long spiral steel shavings, without the least particle of vegetable fibre. It was found in Switzerland at a place which is the centre of a large watch-manufacturing district.

Your egg-collector would scarcely think of climbing to the top of a blast furnace, or of descending a coal-pit, after the many speckled and coloured objects of his search; yet on the top of one of the unused furnaces near Ardrossan, a pigeon's nest with three eggs was discovered; and the bottom of a shaft near Airdrie had taken the fancy of a starling, which returned next day to the strange place of its choice, after being taken to the surface.

The eider-ducks of the Norway coast, birds from

which the soft and warm eider-down is produced, are very hard to suit in the matter of selecting building sites for their broods' homes. It is not unusual for a duck, after examining all likely spots out-of-doors, to march boldly into a house and coolly select what she considers a suitable place for her nest, such as the oven, if it happens to be unused at the time. The human inmates of the house welcome her gladly, supply her with food, and cheerfully submit to any small inconveniences like the temporary loss of their oven, for they know that their guest will pay a good price for her board and lodging. After finishing the nest, made of sticks and grass, the eider-duck plucks the soft down from her breast and makes a wonderful mat, which rises so far above the edge of the nest, that it can be folded over the eggs when the duck goes away in search of food.

LEAVES.

THE leaves came forth in the early Spring;
They heard the call of birds on the wing;
The soft white snow had wrapped them warm
From the biting frost—from the bitter storm,
And they whispered at touch of the sunbeam's kiss:
'What a very beautiful world is this!'

Yes, the gay young leaves had a glorious time
Dancing all day to the south wind's chime;
The dewdrops bathed them through summer night,
Then turned to diamonds with morning light,
And the world looked bright through the radiant
gleam,
The beautiful world of a fairy dream.

The leaves grew strong in sunshine and shower,
That curved and rounded them hour by hour;
Their green took many a lovely shade,
As the wind with the sunbeams fluttered and played;
No scars defaced them, no rents were seen,
No tinge of russet among the green.

Bright were the woods while the summer smiled,
But the rains and winds of autumn were wild;
Some leaves at end of the year remained—
Ah! they were broken and bruised and stained;
The green was faded, the fair mould lost;
'Twas the work of the rain, the storm, the frost.

And thus it is at the close of life;
Heart after heart worn out with strife,
Passion and pain have left their trace
On the bowed-down form, on the careworn face;
There will come fresh leaves when winter is o'er,
But the green to the old leaf returns no more.

And dark it would be, our brief youth past,
But for hope of a Spring that will ever last,
When the green comes back to a fadeless leaf,
When the scars are healed, and the rents of grief,
At rest from storms of sorrow and strife,
Are the beautiful leaves of the Tree of Life!

MARY GORGES.

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